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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2016-2004840

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Tuesday, August 16. Use of a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. In addition, applicants are advised that they must provide approval from the State Governor, or their appointee, as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence for the proposed project prior to award. Before awards are made, NOAA will verify that correspondence from the State Governor has been received. See also Section III.C of this FFO.

Funding Opportunity Description: The principal objective of the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants solicitation is to implement projects that use a proactive approach to improve or restore coastal habitat to: 1) strengthen the resilience of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather and 2) support sustainable fisheries and contribute to the recovery of protected resources. Applications submitted under this solicitation will be selected based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed project will enhance the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to the impacts of extreme weather and changing environmental conditions thereby increasing community resilience and improving habitat for species under NOAA jurisdiction. Proposed projects should benefit threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (hereafter, Listed Species), including species identified by NMFS as "Species in the Spotlight" (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html), species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species), or benefit Listed or Managed Species through ecosystem improvements such as restoring habitat for forage fish. Proposed projects should also demonstrate collaboration among stakeholders, as evidenced by recommendations and strategies outlined in multi-stakeholder studies, coastal vulnerability assessments, or comprehensive planning efforts designed to address ecosystem resiliency.

Successful applications will: 1) identify an issue limiting the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) to benefit from the project, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed coastal habitat restoration project.

Applications selected for funding through this solicitation will be funded through cooperative agreements. Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$8.5 million. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$250,000 to \$750,000. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (recipient contributions or third party in-kind cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000.

NOAA will only award funds to proposed projects that receive approval from the State's Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence. If a letter from the Governor cannot be obtained, a letter provided by a Governor's appointee, with a carbon copy (cc) to the Governor, will be sufficient. Funds will be administered by the NOAA Restoration Center.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants solicitation is to support projects that use a proactive approach to improve or restore coastal habitat to: 1) strengthen the resilience of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems and decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather; and 2) support sustainable fisheries and contribute to the recovery of protected resources.

Applications submitted under this solicitation will be selected based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed project will enhance the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to the impacts of extreme weather and changing environmental conditions, thereby increasing community resilience and improving habitat for species under NOAA jurisdiction. Proposed projects should benefit threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (hereafter, Listed Species), including species identified by NMFS as “Species in the Spotlight”

(http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html), species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species), or benefit Listed or Managed Species through ecosystem improvements such as restoring habitat for forage fish.

Successful applications will: 1) identify the issue limiting the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project’s outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) to benefit from the project, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed coastal habitat restoration project.

Applications submitted in response to this solicitation should propose projects that restore functional coastal ecosystems to build resilience to extreme weather events and protect communities while also providing healthy habitat to support sustainable fisheries (Managed Species) and the recovery of Listed Species under NOAA jurisdiction. Projects that restore wetlands, functional floodplains, free-flowing riverine systems through barrier removal, coral and shellfish reefs, or create living shorelines thereby providing habitat for fish to reproduce and develop are sought. These projects should also provide resiliency benefits such as eliminating risks associated with outdated structures, providing flood reduction and protection benefits, or allowing for adaptation to climate impacts such as sea-level rise and

extreme weather. Proposed restoration projects that directly result in resilient ecosystems with the greatest capacity to provide habitat and reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather and changing environmental conditions will be most successful under this solicitation.

A primary objective of this solicitation is to implement projects that result from collaboration among stakeholders including coastal communities, local and state agencies, academic institutions, tribes, nonprofit organizations, and federal agencies. Applicants can demonstrate this collaboration by proposing ecosystem-based restoration projects that result from recommendations and strategies outlined in multi-stakeholder studies, coastal vulnerability assessments, or comprehensive planning efforts that address ecosystem resiliency, seek to minimize risks associated with extreme weather events, and provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts.

Multiple project sites may be included within one application; however, applicants seeking funds for restoration across multiple sites should propose restoration sites that are functionally or ecologically connected, follow a comprehensive and integrated approach, and feature shared or complementary outcome goals. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be 36 months. See Section II.B of this FFO for more information about the period of performance of projects funded under this competition.

B. Program Priorities

The program priorities for this funding opportunity support NOAA's "Healthy Oceans" and "Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies" goals for marine fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity sustained within healthy and productive ecosystems (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/goals/>). Coastal ecosystem resiliency projects include, but are not limited to, actions that restore degraded or altered marine, estuarine, coastal, and riverine habitats in a manner that results in multiple benefits and maximizes resiliency to extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions thereby decreasing the vulnerability of coastal communities. These projects may also be referred to as nature-based solutions or green infrastructure, but for the purposes of this competition projects should result in functioning, resilient ecosystems that restore healthy habitat important for Managed or Listed Species, or native species in the Great Lakes. High priority will be given to proposed project applications that address the following goals:

- restore habitat to support healthy fish populations and provide sustainable and lasting ecosystem functions that reduce hazard vulnerability and risks posed to U.S. coastal communities from extreme weather events, changing environmental conditions, and allow for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts;

- demonstrate collaboration and alignment among multiple stakeholders, including state and federal agencies, by proposing projects that implement ecosystem-based restoration recommendations and site-specific strategies outlined in existing coastal vulnerability or resiliency studies and comprehensive planning efforts;
- result in socio-economic benefits associated with the restoration of healthy and resilient U.S. coastal ecosystems, such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs;
- restore habitat within NOAA priority areas, such as Blueprint Habitat Focus Areas, (<http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/habitatblueprint/>) or habitat for Listed species, including Species in the Spotlight (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html);
- implement on-the-ground restoration actions that will begin within 24 months of the proposed award start date, will result in beneficial impacts, and achieve the stated ecosystem resiliency and habitat goals; and
- receive approval from the State Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence, such as a letter from a Governor's appointee, prior to award (see Section III.C). Before awards are made, NOAA will verify that correspondence from the State Governor has been received.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act, 16 U.S.C. 1891a; and Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1535.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$8.5 million. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$250,000 to \$750,000. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under

this solicitation. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (recipient contributions or third party in-kind cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000.

The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. NOAA will only award funds to projects that receive and demonstrate approval of the State's Governor to implement the proposed project as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence by the time of award. If a letter from the Governor cannot be obtained, a letter provided by a Governor's appointee, with a carbon copy (cc) to the Governor, will be sufficient. Any funds provided to successful applicants will be at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Grants Management Division.

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for coastal ecosystem resiliency projects, and the merit and ranking of the applications.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a period of performance between 12 and 36 months. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, but may award a project where the period of performance extends up to 48 months. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be December 1, 2016. Pre-award costs are generally unallowable, however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk. Permission to extend the period of performance beyond that stated in award documentation should be requested in writing at least 30 days in advance of an award's expiration date, as stated in the terms and conditions of an award.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many

aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the coastal ecosystem resilience project, review and comment on design plans, review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.324, and tracking the progress towards the successful completion of the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profit or for-profit organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from individuals, federal agencies, or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Individuals and federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (recipient contributions or third party cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000. Furthermore, applicants should note that cost sharing is an element considered in Evaluation Criterion #4 "Project Costs" (Section V.A.4.d).

Federal sources cannot be considered for matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Match to NOAA funds can come from the recipient or a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services, such as volunteer labor. Refer to 2 C.F.R. 200.306 for cost sharing or matching policies, including how valuation of contributions is established. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from non-federal partners, as long as such contributions are not used to match any other federal funds and are available within the project period stated in the application. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates planning to provide cost sharing may find it convenient to propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV.F. "Funding Restrictions" for information on indirect costs.

Applicants whose applications are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of

cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division, unless amended based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once agreed to by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the overall number of volunteers and third party in-kind participation hours devoted to habitat restoration projects. Letters of commitment for any secured resources that will be used as match for an award under this solicitation should be submitted as an attachment to the application (see Section IV.B).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$100,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov and the address for paper applications and the governor's letter is contained in Section IV.G. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than five business days following the closing date will not be accepted. All applications **MUST** contain **ALL** required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they **MUST** be signed in ink (SF-424, SF-424B, CD-511). Failure to submit necessary signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition. Paper applications should also be accompanied by a CD or DVD with the entire application as one Adobe PDF file.

Section III.A presents information distinguishing eligible versus ineligible organization types. Applications that propose projects in the Commonwealth and Territories of the United States, for this solicitation defined as American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, are eligible, but those in the Freely Associated States are not eligible for funding consideration. Proposals that solely benefit Listed Species under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are not eligible, unless the species is jointly managed by NOAA. Projects that focus on marine debris prevention and removal or acquisition of real property are also not eligible as there are separate funding opportunities available for those projects (available at www.grants.gov). Beach re-nourishment projects are also ineligible.

NOAA recognizes that water quality issues can impact Listed Species recovery and Managed Species sustainability. However, this program is intended to fund on-the-ground habitat restoration resulting in physical habitat modifications and more resilient coastal

ecosystems. Proposals addressing only water quality improvement measures are not eligible. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, and non-point source pollution projects such as replacement of failing septic systems and implementation of agricultural animal waste management plans.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will not be considered for federal funding: (1) activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

NOAA will establish cooperative agreement awards with applicants that have successfully received approval from their State's Governor, or their appointee, for the proposed project. This requirement does not apply when the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe conducting a project within the bounds of Tribal land.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions.html>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, NOAA recommends the following as part of a complete application package:

- Project summary (described below, 2 page limit);
- Project narrative (described below, 15 page limit);
- Data management plan (described below, 2 page limit);
- Budget justification (described below, 4 page limit);
- Project design plans, if applicable;
- Other relevant supporting materials (15 page limit) such as:

--A site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map or aerial photo with site location(s) highlighted;

--Brief curriculum vitae or resume(s) for up to three (3) key personnel (maximum of one page per person) and examples of similar projects that have been successfully completed by the project team;

-- A letter(s) documenting land owner and private/public land manager support; and

-- Any other relevant supporting materials such as letters of support (including those from adjoining land owners and those documenting financial and third party in-kind support), documentation of a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, monitoring plans, and site photos etc.

Applications submitted through the www.Grants.gov website should include a maximum of four files (PDF files only) in addition to the Federal application forms: 1) Summary, narrative, and data sharing plan (not to exceed 19 pages total, as outlined above); 2) Budget justification (4 pages); 3) Project designs; and 4) Supplemental information - all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as maps, curriculum vitae, and support letters, not to exceed 15 pages. Page limits assume a 12-point font and 1-inch margins.

1. Project Summary (2 page limit):

- Applicant Organization
- Project Title
- Site Location: nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates
- Brief Project Description/Executive Summary: Briefly describe the activities to be

implemented with the requested funds including: 1) the issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions; 2) the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and detailed actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) the measurable impact on the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) to benefit from the project, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

- **Project Performance Measures and Outcomes:** Common measures used for habitat restoration may include, but are not limited to, the number of acres to be restored and stream miles to be made accessible to diadromous fish through the proposed activities. Other measures may include those that demonstrate increased resiliency, which may represent reduced social, economic, or ecological risks due to climate change or severe weather.
- **Project Time Line:** Include an implementation start date (e.g. on-the-ground construction start date) for the proposed project activities (not proposed award start date).
- **Permits and Approvals:** Identify and list all consultations, permits, and regulatory approvals necessary for the proposed project and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured).
- **Land owner(s):** Provide name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact and their level of support for the proposed project.
- **Amount of Federal Funding Requested**
- **Non-Federal Match Proposed**
- **Overall Project Cost:** Include leveraged funds beyond match proposed.

2. Project Narrative (15 page limit):

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. Project applications should clearly: 1) identify the issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on

the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) to benefit from the project, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

The narrative should:

- succinctly describe the historic condition of the project site and the challenges to coastal ecosystem resiliency to be addressed as the primary focus of the proposed project;
- clearly identify the short-term objectives and long-term ecosystem resiliency and habitat restoration goals of the proposed activities;
- describe the proposed restoration action and implementation details;
- clearly describe how the proposed restoration project design, methodology, and techniques will increase resiliency of the ecosystem and account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts or severe weather;
- identify the fish species (e.g. Managed or Listed Species) targeted by the project, their historic and current status or population estimates, and the extent to which they will benefit from the proposed project;
- highlight the relevant planning efforts associated with the project and any synergies with other resiliency or conservation efforts in the watershed, especially Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plans, Fishery Management Plans, green infrastructure planning, or other conservation and resiliency studies or assessments, strategic planning or management; and
- identify community benefits, such as: increased economic activity; enhanced recreation including fishing, changes in human well-being; improved or protected infrastructure; decreased flooding impacts; elimination of safety hazards; and/or reduced maintenance costs that may result from the proposed project.

Additionally, detailed, technical information about the proposed project activities and site should be fully described. For each site, applicants should clearly identify the project phase(s) proposed (e.g. engineering design, construction) and provide a detailed implementation plan, including proposed implementation techniques. For applicants proposing design and permitting activities, a detailed scope of services or tasks to be completed under this award should be included in the proposal. For applicants proposing restoration implementation, design plans, specifications, required permits and consultations,

scope of work for services, and cost estimates should be included in the application.

Applicants proposing to install fish passage devices or operational control structures such as self-regulating tide gates as a component of the project should include discussion of a management plan that details who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of such structures and how they will be operated and maintained in the future. Applicants proposing to alter tidal exchange should also provide a hydrograph showing any tidal restrictions and projected conditions with restoration. Applicants proposing to enhance existing tidal wetlands, including beneficial re-use of dredged material to increase elevation to keep pace with sea level rise and subsidence, should provide information on the source of the dredge materials, the site-specific rate of sea level rise and subsidence, target elevation, and how the restored site will keep pace with the rate of sea level rise and subsidence. Applicants proposing to place plants or animals into the environment should include the origin/source and regional genetic stock of the plant or animal, and describe the proximity to any existing or remnant sources of similar type in the area.

To protect the federal investment, the narrative should describe future management beyond the period of performance, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the project site so the multiple benefits of the funded resiliency project will be lasting. This should include documentation of land owner/land manager support for the project.

The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones identified and detail how the project will be completed within the specified time period. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B.4). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement), the lead federal agency, contact information for the lead federal agency person, and where copies of the document are available.

All proposals should include measures to enable NOAA to evaluate, upon completion, whether the project was executed as designed. Examples include short-term measures such as as-built surveys of construction, post-planting inspection reports, or other appropriate measures. All proposals for fish passage barrier removal, hydrologic reconnection, coral recovery, and oyster restoration projects should include discrete monitoring plans. Specific metrics have been identified for these project types to consistently evaluate whether a project was implemented as designed and provides a basic level of effectiveness. The structure and

suggested metrics for these four project types are included in “NOAA Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring: Guidance for proposing and conducting “Tier I” Monitoring,” available at: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. Applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust the monitoring plan, if necessary, to ensure sufficient, cost-effective implementation monitoring.

NOAA will also consider proposals that include more in-depth, longer-term monitoring that addresses ecological, restoration technique, and/or socioeconomic effectiveness. NOAA may choose to provide additional funds to an award or increase the award period for successful applicants whose awards are identified as suitable for effectiveness monitoring.

Applicants should also consider proposing measures that demonstrate increases in resiliency, which may represent reduced social, economic, or ecological risks due to climate change or severe weather. Examples include short-term measures such as number of structures benefitting, changes in the number of days that a road is flooded, change in shellfisheries’ closing days, change in recreational use, etc.

If multiple restoration sites are included within one application, the proposed restoration activities should be hydrologically or ecologically connected, follow a comprehensive and integrated approach, and feature shared or complementary outcome goals. Applications that include multiple restoration sites should also fully describe the proposed activity at each site within the project narrative section. If page limits are restrictive, focus the application on the technical aspects of the proposed actions and on those actions with highest priority funding needs. If you cannot describe all aspects of a multi-site project within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

3. Data Management Plan (2 pages)

Proposals submitted in response to this FFO should include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The plan is required as part of NOAA's data sharing policy described in Section VI.B.5 below, and will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria under Section V.A.1.g. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Sharing Plan examples provided by NOAA at: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be

included in the proposal budget. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Final Data Management Plans will be developed in coordination with NOAA as part of NOAA's substantial involvement, as described in Section II.C

4. Budget Justification (4 pages):

The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal shares. Applicants should indicate whether or not the proposed non-federal share has been secured or not. The object classes should match those found in the Form SF-424A.

If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project with multiple funding sources, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included.

Additional budget development guidance, including a budget narrative template, is available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html> in the "Supplemental Instructions." The NOAA Restoration Center and GMD staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants should: (1) Be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal

award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of seven days to complete the SAM registration, although complete registration for SAM may take several weeks if problems arise.

Registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on August 16, 2016. The time the application was provided to a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. See Section III.C for more information and IV.G for address to submit paper applications.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under the FFO are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on Form SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC). To find out about and comply with a State's process under Executive Order 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable in this program, however, pre-award costs may be considered and discussed during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally via NOAA Grants Online on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be December 1, 2016.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g. lights, rent, water, and

insurance). Documentation of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose all or part of indirect costs as cost sharing.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM and DUNS are required, as described in Section IV.C.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt by Grants.gov, not NOAA; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Restoration Center to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as waivers of the submission deadline will not be granted. Late applications will not be accepted.

If an applicant is unable to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov) or is unsure about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, a signed hard copy application must be

postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times" in Section IV.D and sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries, 1315 East-West Highway, Rm. 14853, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: 2016 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants. Mandatory requirements regarding signatures and the format of hard copy applications are described in Section III.C. Documents confirming a State Governor's support for the project should also be sent to this address.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and Applicability (35 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Issue Identification - To what extent does the application describe an issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions, the proposed project's outcome goal(s), the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk, and propose actions with a measureable impact on the ecosystem, the species (e.g. Listed or Managed Species) to benefit from the project, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project? (7 points)

(b) Changes in Vulnerability - To what extent does the proposed project restore coastal ecosystems in a manner that maximizes resiliency to extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions thereby decreasing the vulnerability of communities, including physical and socio-economic vulnerability? (7 points)

(c) Benefits to NOAA Resources- How great is the potential of the proposed project to restore or create resilient, healthy habitat for the benefit of: 1) species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under NOAA jurisdiction including species identified by NMFS as "Species in the Spotlight"; and/or 2) species managed by NOAA under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act? This may include projects benefitting Critical Habitat, Essential Fish Habitat, habitat for species native to the Great Lakes Basin, and projects that benefit Listed or Managed Species through ecosystem

improvements such as restoring habitat for forage fish. Benefit to Listed or Managed species is necessary to receive full points under this criterion. (5 points)

(d) Program Priorities - To what extent does the proposed project align with the priorities described in Section I.B Program Priorities? (5 points)

(e) Tangible Results - To what extent does the proposed project meet NOAA's mission to protect and restore marine and coastal habitats by delivering tangible, specific results that are measurable and relevant to NOAA performance measures such as 1) habitat acres restored, 2) stream miles opened for migratory fish passage, or 3) similar measureable outputs that directly result from the project? (5 points)

(f) Socio-economic Benefits - To what extent will the proposed project yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, increased value of property, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs? To what extent are these benefits measureable (e.g. number of structures benefitting, changes in the number of days that a road is flooded, change in shellfisheries' closing days, change in recreational use)? (5 points)

(g) Public Access to Data - Does the application include a Data Sharing Plan including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data? (1 point)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (25 points): This criterion assesses whether the project activity or approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant has described a realistic and thorough implementation plan that includes:

(a) Project Feasibility - To what extent is the proposed project feasible from a biological, engineering and social perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe for the public, and uses appropriate methods and personnel? (5 points)

(b) Project Timeline - To what extent does the application completely describe the proposed restoration actions, current status of the project (e.g. 60% design plans are

complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, key milestones throughout the course of the project, and a realistic time frame to reach those milestones within the proposed award period? Will the project implement on-the-ground restoration actions within 24 months? (5 points)

(c) Adaptation to Climate Change - To what extent does the proposed project site and methodology increase ecosystem resiliency and account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts? (5 points)

(d) Measurable Goals - To what extent will the proposed project be able to report progress towards broad goals and measure near-term implementation success? Does the proposal include meaningful measures to enable NOAA to evaluate whether the project was executed as designed, including NOAA RC Tier I monitoring for applicable project types (See section IV.B.2)? Pre- and post-implementation monitoring may include both ecological and socio-economic metrics. (5 points)

(e) Sustainability - How great is the potential of the proposed project to be sustainable and provide lasting benefits to maintain ecosystem resiliency for species targeted by the project and its habitat? Is there evidence that the applicant has chosen the most self-sustaining restoration technique that accomplishes the project's goals and/or evidence that habitat impacts will not recur? Is there land owner/land manager support, documented in the application (e.g. a support letter)? (5 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to support the proposed award. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following (as demonstrated by attached resumes, past project experience, and accomplishments of the key technical and financial staff):

(a) Restoration and Conservation Background - Does the applicant have the capacity and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing projects that restore marine and coastal habitats? (6 points)

(b) Management Capacity - Does the applicant describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment and administrative resources available to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award? (4 points)

4. Project Costs (20 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and time-frame. For this competition, applications will be evaluated on the following:

- (a) Cost-benefit Comparison - Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant impact and benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple sites or phases, the application should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each site or phase to place the funding request in context. (5 points)
- (b) Budget Detail - Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of project costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and non-federal shares? (6 points)
- (c) Funding Priorities - Does the proposed budget direct the majority of federal funds, including funds for salaries, to implement the restoration actions (i.e. project design, implementation, and monitoring), needed to achieve coastal ecosystem resiliency, compared to the percentage used for general program support including administration? (5 points)
- (d) Cost-sharing - Does the proposed non-federal match meet or surpass the required 2:1 federal to non-federal match ratio and to what extent is the non-federal match contribution confirmed? Applicants that provide documentation that acceptable, secured match and leveraged funding are available within the proposed project period will score higher on this criterion. No points will be awarded under this criterion if review indicates the applicant may not meet the required 2:1 ratio. Two points will be awarded if review indicates the proposal meets the required ratio, and at least some matching funds are confirmed. Full points will be awarded for proposals offering over 1:1 match and strong leverage. (4 points)

5. Outreach and Education (10 points): NOAA assesses whether the award can deliver a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- (a) Community Involvement - Does the proposed project(s) include a wide base of stakeholder and community support that demonstrate the resiliency effort has been put forward by common agreement through inclusion in a public planning process? To what degree does the proposed project(s) have community support as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and/or sponsorship (letters of support, confirmed contributions) from local

entities, tribes, local and state governments, and/or members of Congress? (5 points)

(b) Information Dissemination - Does the proposal include public outreach as it relates to the project, including plans to disseminate information on: 1) ecosystem resiliency goals and results; 2) sources of funding and other support provided, such as the involvement of partners; and 3) the potential for the proposed project to encourage future resiliency efforts and protection of marine and coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities? (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative review to determine if they are eligible and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed above. After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official (SO) regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A. and I.B.). The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

The panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the technical review, technical review scores, and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:

3- Excellent-- Application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria;

2-Good-- Application partially addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria; or

1-Fair-- Application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

This rating will be presented to the SO for funding consideration and will be the primary consideration of the SO in deciding which applications will be recommended to the NOAA

GMD, pending the application of selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

The SO, an official within the Office of Habitat Conservation, anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

- (1) Availability of funding;
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;
- (3) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
- (4) Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
- (5) An applicant's prior award performance;
- (6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- (7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

In addition, the NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be addressed in a timely fashion in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final and there is no right of appeal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA will attempt to notify highly-ranked applicants by November 30, 2016. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be December 1, 2016. Applicants that initiate award activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration cooperative agreement award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these awards.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award,

issued by a NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. It is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

3. The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports. These award conditions are subject to change prior to award but examples are provided at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>.

4. NEPA Requirements - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts for individual projects as required by NEPA. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under the description of their activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, safety concerns, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g. the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants are encouraged to consult with NOAA as early as possible on proposed projects to discuss NEPA considerations, and should review the restoration-specific environmental compliance documents available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. Funds will not be released

until NOAA completes the requisite NEPA analysis and documentation. Funds may be withheld by the GMD under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental law compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of impacts that the award may have on the environment.

Applicants proposing activities that cannot be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, that are not covered by existing NOAA programmatic NEPA documents, or whose activities are not covered under another agency's NEPA compliance procedures, which can be analyzed and adopted by NOAA, will be informed after the technical review stage. Such applicants may be requested to assist in the preparation of an EA prior to an award being made, or provide for NOAA review a copy of an EA/EIS that covers proposed activities if one exists. Awardees will be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposed sub-award or sub-contract projects, especially for projects requiring NOAA to consult under the ESA. Failure to agree to do so shall be grounds for not awarding funds or for terminating an award.

5. Data Sharing Requirements- Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to the NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

6. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions - When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding

Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

7. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not yet have been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Progress reports shall use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0472. This form will be provided to awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of \$25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing, a checklist to submit a complete application, and FAQs about this FFO can be found at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html> and

www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/coastalresiliency.html, respectively. For further information contact Melanie Gange at (301) 427-8664, or by e-mail at Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552). In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA.